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Mahathir-IT

DR MAHATHIR SUGGESTS ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR IT COUNCIL

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has suggested that a governing body be set up to spearhead a more integrated development of Information Technology (IT) in the public sector.

The proposed body would serve as the main mechanism to follow on implementation of national IT policies and strategies and inculcate the IT culture in the public sector, he said.

"The council that I am proposing may be called the Government IT and Internet Council (GITIC)," he said officiating at the the Prime Minister's Quality Award presentation and a national symposium on electronic government at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

He hoped that MAMPU, the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Planning Unit, which handled public sector IT development, would consider the proposal for implementation.

Dr Mahathir said one function which could be incorporated into the proposed council's terms of reference was planning and determining safeguards and applying appropriate standards.

The proposed council could also serve to expand and regulate public sector use of the Internet, he said.

This was because of the unlimited exposure to the Internet whereas the government had agreed not to have a censorship policy on Internet content, he said.

The Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali and Mampu director-general Datuk Dr Muhammad Rais Abdul Karim told reporters later that they would take up the prime minister's proposal.

Dr Mahathir also elaborated on the electronic government programme which he said required each civil servant, from the highest to the lowest level, to acquire sufficient understanding of IT and develop the capacity to apply the technology efficiently.

He said the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) had drawn up a comprehensive training programme.

Initially more than 130,000 officers and staff would be trained according to their level of posts up to the year 2000.

Apart from multi-media technology, Dr Mahathir said another vital element which could be a catalyst in the implementation of the Electronic Government was use of the Internet technology.

"I am happy to see an increasing number of government agencies using the Internet technology for instance in setting up their respective homepages and benefiting from the Internet facility to enhance management and administrative efficiency," he said.

He wanted every government agency to take note of the government's decision that all agencies develop their own homepages before the year 2000 to ensure the success of the -- "Civil Service Link" (CSL) which functioned through the Internet.

The Prime Minister said some 50 proposals had been received from private companies in response to the government's call to them to submit proposals on the appropriate ways of implementing the Electronic Government.

The proposals were being assessed and the name of the successful company would be announced in February next year, he said.

"The Electronic Government goes beyond the mere use of computers in the offices."

"Its vision is wider in scope encompassing the concept of more meaningful communication between government officers and the government as well as with the people and between the government and the business community," he said.

He said the objective was bigger than merely upgrading quality and productivity -- to create an environment which promoted smart partnership in the development of the nation's IT.

Dr Mahathir also launched the "e-link Kiosk Awam Malaysia", which enabled users to obtain the latest information and make payments to various government agencies.

The four agencies involved in the pilot kiosk project are the police, Immigration Department, Information Department and Telekom Malaysia Berhad.

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